

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

Claim 1 (Withdrawn): An information processing apparatus for studying a target case by communicating information through a network, comprising:
request means for requesting a first inspector to study the target case; and
detection means for detecting access to a database relating to the target case by the first inspector.

Claim 2 (Withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:
report means for reporting a detection result obtained by said detection means to a requester who has requested the first inspector to study the case.

Claim 3 (Withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 2, wherein
said report means checks an access state by the first inspector at predetermined time intervals, and issues a predetermined reminder when no access is detected a predetermined time after the request.

Claim 4 (Withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:
suspension means for suspending a request from a requester who has requested the first inspector to study the case at an instruction of the requester.

Claim 5 (Withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 4, further comprising:
re-request means for requesting a second inspector different from the first inspector at
an inspection of the requester to accept a request of a requester who has requested the first
inspector to study the case.

Claim 6 (Withdrawn): An information processing method for studying a target case by
communicating information through a network, comprising the steps of:
requesting a first inspector to study the target case; and
detecting access to a database relating to the target case by the first inspector

Claim 7 (Withdrawn): An program storage medium storing a program for realizing an
information processing method for studying a target case by communicating information
through a network, comprising:
a code for requesting a first inspector to study target case; and
a code for detecting access to a database relating to the target case by the first inspcctor.

Claim 8 (Withdrawn): An information processing apparatus for studying a target case
by communicating information through a network, comprising:
a table relating to organization information; and
management means for selectively performing by referring to said table a first study
management mode in which the target case is studied through a predctermind path, and a
second study management mode in which an inspector who inspects the target case sequentially
requests a subsequent inspector to study the case.

Claim 9 (Withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 8, wherein said table relating to the organization information indicates a hierarchical management structure in a company.

Claim 10 (Withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 8, further comprising: a study path pattern table storing a plurality of patterns of study paths for the first study management mode.

Claim 11 (Withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 8, wherein in the second study management mode, a request for study is issued by specifying a name of an inspector without using said table relating to the organization information.

Claim 12 (Withdrawn): An information processing method for studying a target case by communicating information through a network, comprising the steps of: referring to a table relating to organization information; and performing a managing step by selectively performing based on said referring step a first study management mode in which the target case is studied through a predetermined path, and a second study management mode in which an inspector who inspects the target case sequentially requests a subsequent inspector to study the case.

Claim 13 (Withdrawn): A program storage medium storing a program for realizing an information processing method for studying a target case by communicating information through a network, comprising:

 a code for referring to a table relating to organization information; and
 a code for realizing a managing step by selectively performing based on said referring process a first study management mode in which the target case is studied through a predetermined path, and a second study management mode in which an inspector who inspects the target case sequentially requests a subsequent inspector to study the case.

Claim 14 (Withdrawn): An information processing apparatus for generating a document relating to a patent application by communicating information through a network, comprising:

 association means for dividing a patent application procedure into a plurality of steps, and associating a reference document used in generating a document in step units with a due date of generation of the document; and
 management means for managing generation of the document.

Claim 15 (Withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 14, wherein said plurality of steps contain an application and a rejection reason response.

Claim 16 (Withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 14, wherein said management means manages generation of the document by making links to a management database for item management and a document database for document management.

Claim 17 (Withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 14, wherein said management means manages generation of the document by defining a virtual file in a network.

Claim 18 (Withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 17, wherein a timing of generating a file is defined in said step units relating to the virtual file.

Claim 19 (Withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 17, wherein a process performed when a file is generated is defined in said step units relating the virtual file.

Claim 20 (Withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 17, wherein a timing of extinguishing a file is defined in said step units relating to the virtual file.

Claim 21 (Withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 17, wherein a process performed when a file is extinguished is defined in said step units relating the virtual file.

Claim 22 (Withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 17, wherein a related document is defined in said step units relating to the virtual file.

Claim 23 (Withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 17, wherein

a study and approval path is defined in said step units relating to the virtual file.

Claim 24 (Withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 17, wherein said virtual file can be copied, and simultaneously distributed through a network using a plurality of paths.

Claims 25 and 26 (Cancelled).

Claim 27 (Currently Amended): An information processing apparatus for accumulating technical documents relating to a patent application, comprising:
accumulation means for accumulating a related technical prior art document for the patent application; and
display control means for displaying a list of technical prior art documents of a said patent application and a corresponding foreign patent application of said patent application accumulated in said accumulation means.

Claim 28 (Currently Amended): The information processing apparatus according to claim 27, wherein
said display control means displays a flag indicating whether or not a prior art disclosure procedure has been performed on the technical prior art document.

Claim 29 (Currently Amended): The information processing apparatus according to claim 27, wherein

said display control means displays descriptions indicating correspondence between the technical prior art document and a rejection reason.

 Claim 30 (Currently Amended): The information processing apparatus according to claim 27, wherein

 said display control means displays a list of applications by which the technical prior art document has been cited relating to the technical prior art document.

 Claim 31 (Currently Amended): An information processing method for accumulating technical documents relating to a patent application, comprising the steps of:

 accumulating a related technical prior art document for the patent application; and
 displaying and controlling a list of technical prior art documents of a said patent application and a corresponding foreign patent application of said patent application accumulated in said accumulation step.

 Claim 32 (Currently Amended): A program storage medium storing a program for realizing an information processing method for accumulating technical prior art documents relating to a patent application, comprising the steps of:

 a code for realizing an accumulation step of accumulating a related technical prior art document for the patent application; and

 a code for realizing a displaying and controlling a list of technical prior art documents of a said patent application and a corresponding foreign patent application of said patent application accumulated in said accumulation step.